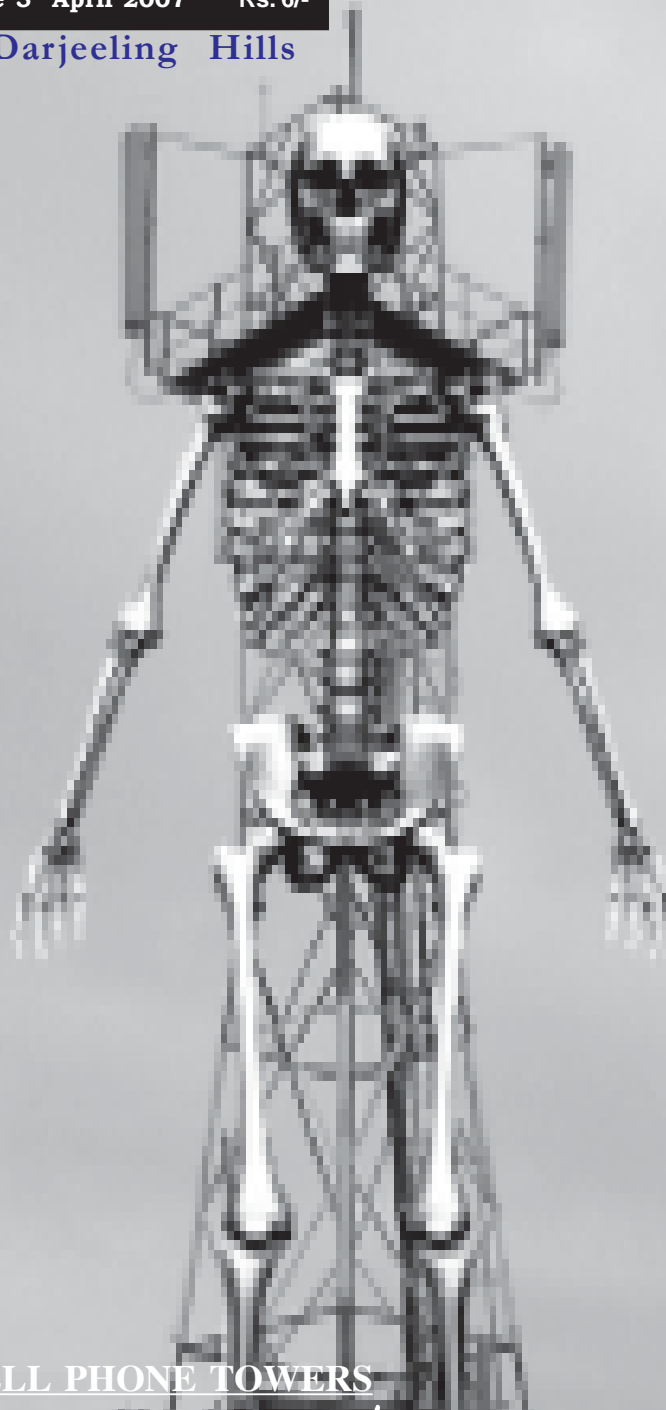


The voice of the Darjeeling Hills

Himalayan Times

CELL PHONES & CELL PHONE TOWERS

THE SILENT KILLER



Education
The Life line of
Kalimpong

St. George's School
Mr. Gilbert Singh
The forgotten hero

Water Harvesting
In the
Darjeeling Hills

DARJEELING
A paradise on
Earth

THEIR
WORDS
OUR
VOCABULARY

Roman Catholic
Diocese of
Darjeeling



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Gangtok) * Joram Chhetri (in 15th Mile) * Pemba Sherpa (in Pudung) * Tara Subba (in Aritar)

EDITORIAL

Well the tourist season is back knocking at our doors again and, in all probabilities, Kalimpong like always would once again lie back on its easy chair gaping at the hundreds of tourist buses and thousands of tourist jeeps ferrying visitors to and from Sikkim. A small percentage of them will of course make a diversion, as if with a sense of pity, and climb up towards Kalimpong from Chitray. But this percentage would be too minute a figure to actually entitle Tourism to the tag of being an industry in the town.

As far as tourism is concerned we are still the little step brothers of Darjeeling and Sikkim. But have those responsible for the development of tourism in the town sincerely tried to analyze why??? It definitely is not because we lack the natural beauty that Darjeeling and Sikkim sell to their clients. Kalimpong is equally beautiful if not more- and we have much more. We have the virgin forests, we have the alluring floriculture, we have a fascinating historical story to tell, we have a very vibrant mix of cultures to attract visitors with. We have the story of the Rorichs, Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, the Burma Raja, The Tibet Trade and the Younghusband expedition etc etc to sell to the visitors- yet visitors to Kalimpong seem to have nothing to do here except the seven point sight seeing tour, which of course is just an eye wash!!! Why???

Well its because Sikkim and Darjeeling have more sense than us and they have more business acumen than us- They recognize a good business opportunity when they spot one. Now they have taken to selling things that was, is and always will be ours!! The sell the story of the Rorichs, the Younghusband expedition, the Tibet Trade and the Tibetan handicrafts (which actually again is made in Kalimpong) and pass it unashamedly as their own- attracting thousands of visitors. The Sikkimese Travel operators seem to have all but patented the Kanchenjunga also. The fact is, as one Bengali visitor to the area puts it, "Kanchenjunga looks like Tuntun from Sikkim and like Ashwaria Rai from Kalimpong (meaning to say it looks fat and ugly from Sikkim and slim and beautiful from Kalimpong).

The need of the day is for Kalimpong to get its act together, get itself a proper body to promote tourism, brand Kalimpong as a product, package itself properly and market itself as a attractive tourist destination. If we cannot do this at the earliest, I am afraid the day is not far off when our neighbouring towns will start showing Macfarlane Church through high power telescopes and claim it to be theirs!!!

**DO YOU HAVE ANY THING THAT
YOU WANT TO SHARE WITH THE
REST OF
DARJEELING???**

HAVE YOUR SAY AT

**YOUR
PAGE**

himalayantimes@rediffmail.com

Dear Sir,
You deserve congratulations for the very bold and hard hitting article that you had written in Himalayan Times Volume 3, Issue 4 under the title "Hullabaloo in the Orchid Garden".

Kiran Desai in a way deserves accolades for the highly interesting book that she has written and then again she deserves all the castigations that she gets for the way she has portrayed the Gorkhas and the Gorkhaland movement. And yes you are absolutely right and justified in demanding an apology for how she has described the mass uprising of the late 1980's

Subhas Thami

Via e-mail from Nepalgunj, Nepal

Dear Editor,

I know that in most probabilities you will not be printing this letter but still since Himalayan Times has grown to truly become the "Voice of the Hills", I feel that it is my responsibility as a lover of the region to tell you that the magazine has become too monotonous and at times leads the reader to boredom.

The readers would appreciate if a wider range of topics are covered by the magazine rather than articles of the same nature appearing issue after issue.

If my suggestions are taken positively I am sure that the magazine will attract more readers and more goodwill.

Sonam Wangyel

10½ mile, Kalimpong

Dear Sir,

The article "Degradation of our forests" by Vimal Khawas should serve as an eye opener for all of us. Our once lush green hill sides are disappearing at an alarming rate and a new type of jungle replacing it at a more alarming rate- the concrete jungle.

What Vimal Khawas, the gentleman that he is, did not say was that the primary reason for this deforestation is the "Timber Mafia" of the region. We hope for the sake of our future that the wanton destruction is stopped here and now before it is too late.

Kalpna Gurung

Darjeeling

Dear Sir,

Isn't a tribal symbolized by trees and jungles and wild animals??? Well I may be absolutely off target but I believe that if there are no trees or jungle left then the status of a Tribal Area will not be justified. Lets at least surround ourselves with things a tribal is supposed to be surrounded with and only then lets try to brand ourselves as tribals, i.e. if at all we have to!!

Sujan Bomzon

Darjeeling



By Sandip C. Jain

Appeasing the जो देवता

The power of liquid can never be underestimated- whether it be Petrol or Diesel or alcohol or whatever- each of it has the potential of becoming a mover and shaker of local, national and international politics.

George W. Bush (both senior and junior) fueled by petrol have led America to semi destruction. Boris Yelstin fueled by alcohol led to the total destruction of the Russian influence on the world. All due to a liquid- in whatever form it may be!!!

Now, we in India, specifically in the Darjeeling Hills and more specifically in Kalimpong are out to destruct ourselves for another form of liquid- WATER- which though a life giving and life sustaining substance also has a track record of being a life threatening and life taking one. In fact wise men all over the world brand water to be the most volatile form of all liquids and forecast that the world one day would reshape itself only for water or rather for the lack of it. They suggest that the next Great War would have water as its central agenda.

Back home- whether from the Senchal Lake or the Neora Valley, the fact remains that water running down our taps is drying faster than one can actually collect it. The only thing faster, in this sad watery tale, probably is the *Jal Devtas* (Water Gods) lining their pockets with their ill-gotten gains out of the flourishing illegal water tapping business.

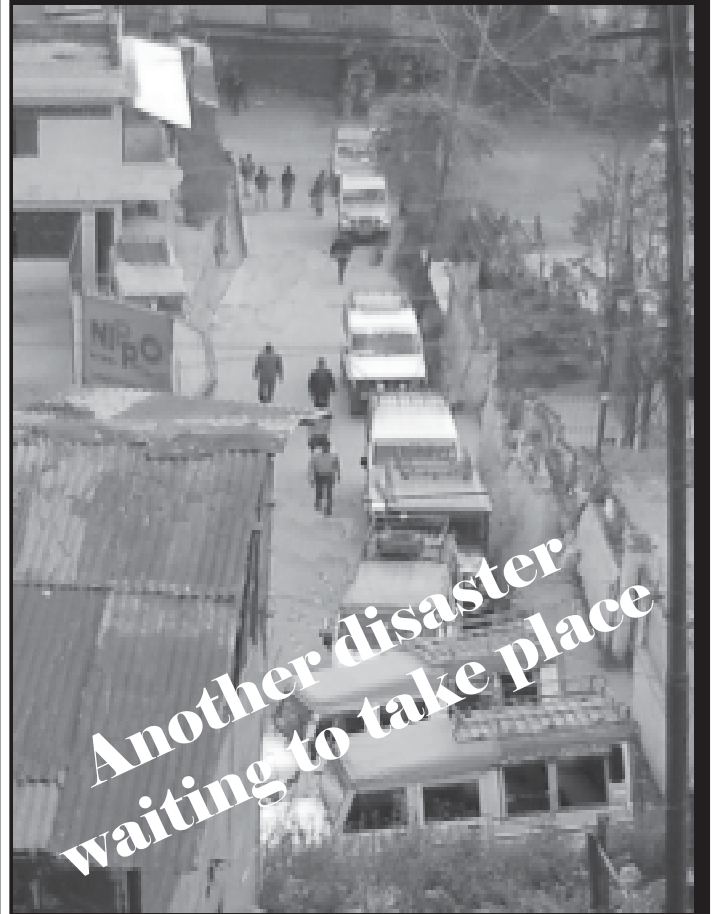
Recent efforts in Kalimpong to weed out illegal water connections fetched a naught- authorities claiming that only five illegal connections could be plugged out of the above a hundred identified between Algarah & Deolo Reservoir. Now they say that there is no harm in regularizing all illegally tapped lines- Noble thoughts indeed but doesn't this sound

more like a rapist being asked to marry his victim??? First the crime committed then the reward received, both by the same person!!! Ahem!!!

Several years back a study conducted by some central government agency on the water problem in Kalimpong suggested in its report that- now hear this- "There is no water shortage in Kalimpong, only a mal-distribution of water" which makes our case one of the "Haves" and Have Nots" i.e. "having water" and "not having water" – some having enough to water their gardens and fields and some not having enough even to drink or clean!!!

The struggle between the haves and have nots have shaped the world down the ages. Let's hope the struggle does not make an appearance in our case here... ■

Cars parked on the steep road leading towards Bagdhara from besides the Mela Ground. After the several accidents that have taken place in this stretch of road it was expected that the authorities banned parking on such a steep road. Another disaster is waiting to take place here!!!!





The lifeline of Kalimpong

By Ville Saikku

Kalimpong has two major sources of income that provide for most of its residents; the schools and the flower nurseries. The thousands of school children that flock to school every morning use the clothing shops, the bookstores, the internet cafes, the taxis and the many lodges and guesthouses that provide them with shelter. During the long winter holiday, from December to February, many of the outstationed children from Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand, Sikkim, and various other places return to their homes. It is during this period that the economy of Kalimpong without the schools can be studied. Many residents of Kalimpong also choose to take their holidays during the winter months, so the city becomes a mere shadow of the hussle and bussle that the children create during their stay here. The streets of Kalimpong become a bit less congested, the restaurants become less crowded and the guesthouses put out the vacancy- sign. How vital are these little children walking endlessly in their school uniforms down the streets?

Welcomed break or unwanted stillness?

Mr. Upasak, the owner of a local bookstore, located opposite the tourist information centre, has provided school children attending the ICSE schools with all the necessary books in English for the past 70 years, admits that school children's purchases account for 70 to 80 percent of their annual sales. When the overall majority of their clients loosen their ties and head home to relax

during the winter break, the change in sales hits hard and the long wait for the end of February, early March surge of students begins. When the end of February finally arrives, the children flock to the many bookstores in the city and can spend from 1000 INR to as much as 3000 INR to acquire the necessary books for the academic year. As there are thousands of children in need of books, pencils, rubbers and other school material, the business they bring to the bookshops is vital and very significant. The clothing stores and tailors also enjoy profits from the return of the children as everyone wants to look smart at the beginning of the academic year. The required smart uniform does not come cheap. For most students this a yearly event; the 2 pairs of trousers, the 3 pairs of shirts, the 2 pairs of shoes for the 2 pairs of socks they have to buy, the blazer and sweater they need, not mention the P.T equipment. This all, even at the rock bottom price is around 4000 INR. In the comfort of a taxi ride, the average student brings taxi drivers a nice 450 INR per student a month add to their salary. Even though the children bring a lot of prosperity to Kalimpong, during the dry months of the winter, when the water shortage is at its highest, the absence of thousands of water drinking, showering and bath soaking children help to keep the water supplies from drying out completely. The long winter holidays were originally introduced specifically to accommodate the weather conditions, which is now more visible as the climate is getting steadily dryer and hotter. However, there are now many, who feel that the time for a rethink and rescheduling of the yearly curriculum is in order. Many want a balanced yearly academic calendar, which will not have such drastic consequences on the local businesses. On the other hand, there are others who consider the long holiday as a welcomed break. For the owners of the various lodges and guesthouses, the winter holidays provides them with time to charge their batteries away from the constant worry of looking after children, away from the energetic youngster running around the premises and provides a golden opportunity to hire the local craftsmen to do some renovations on their premises. Mr. Praful Rao, the owner of the Happy Hours Hostel in Tirpai, who minds children from as young as 6 years of age up to as old as 19-year-olds, has learned to appreciate the peacefulness of the winter months.

“During the winter holiday, the quietness is a welcome relief and also gives us the opportunity to clean and prepare the house for yet another hectic school year,” Mr. Rao explains. “It’s a fulltime job, as you have to constantly be aware of how the children are managing,

whether they are keeping up with their classes, if they need tuition, and whether they are happy,” Mr. Rao continues.

The schools and tuition

The reason why so many parents choose to send their children to the schools of Kalimpong, from their homes in various parts of India, neighbouring Bhutan and Nepal among other places, is because of the reputation the schools have acquired through the years. Receiving an education from one of the ICSE schools is valued as highly here as in the countries, where former students of Kalimpong schools now perform the duties of government ministers, highly respected lawyers and businessmen. When the British established a high standard of schooling through such famous places like Dr. Graham’s Homes, it was through the hard work of local residents which made outstation



children feel the comforts of home here. As word of mouth travelled across the mountains and plains, every year more and more children arrive here to begin their schooling. But big city influences have reached the mountains of the Himalayas, with the expectations of parents and society being shifted by placing more value on diplomas and degrees than on life and work experience. As a consequence extra classes called tuition were introduced. Every parent wants the best possible education for their child and sometimes a private lesson where the teacher takes time to explain and encourage a student is what is required to reach the desired goals. As a by-product, tuition has turned into a lucrative side-business for the teachers and for private residents teaching from their homes.

“Every month I pay on average about 6000 INR for tuition for the children living under my roof,” Mr. Rao recounts. According to the principal of Rockvale Academy, Capt. Prakash Pradhan, roughly every other student takes tuition. This phenomenon is quite recent, because the older generations did not require such extra lessons, but when the pressures from the plains arrived about ten years ago, tuition was established in Kalimpong. The reasons for tuition is not because the standard of teaching has declined, nor is it solely due to the large classroom sizes in the schools, but because it has become a trend, a fashion statement. The principal of Rockvale Academy Captain Pradhan explains; “There are a few reasons why tuition has established itself in the schools of Kalimpong. The biggest reason is because from a young age, the children are put under pressure to perform. Another reason is that the

traditional Indian family structure is diminishing. Now the family unit consists of working parents and children, and in many families, the grandparents, uncles and aunts live separately. The parents have less time for their children due to work schedules and there are no other adults in the house to spare time for children, to encourage and monitor their school progress. Then again, tuition has become a fashionable thing to do.” Now tuition has become yet another form of business branching out from the school children. Let’s consider the enormity of this side business that is blossoming alongside with the many schools in the area. Rajni and Asha, two friends attending the 12th grade in Rockvale Academy, who are preparing for their final exams at the end of the year take tuition in maths and accounting, five hours a week per subject. They spend 350 INR a month per each subject. There are 1200 students in Rockvale Academy and according to Captain Pradhan’s predictions, we can assume hypothetically that about 600 of them take tuition on one or two subjects.



Hypothesis 1

1 subject / month: 600 students x 350 INR = 210 000 INR
2 subjects / month: 600 students x 700 INR = 420 000 INR

Of course this is a very rough estimate, as the number of children taking tuition varies from school to school. There is also a great difference between the number of tuition between younger students and older students, but as this is built on an assumption, only from one school out of 9 ICSE schools in the region, a month of tuition generates some formidable figures.

In some cases, especially when considering outstation students, attending the higher classes (10 to 12), they might decide in order to prepare for upcoming exams, to stay in Kalimpong for a full twelve months. Again let’s be hypothetical and assume that their academic year is a full twelve months.

Hypothesis 2

1 subject / year: 350 INR x 12 months = 4200 INR
2 subjects / year: 700 INR x 12 months = 8400 INR

The students

Rajni Gupta from Bodh Gaya and Asha Gurung from Nepal are two outstation students who have studied in Kalimpong for many years. Studying in a classroom of 73 children and with expectations of good results placed on them, the girls have very little free time during the

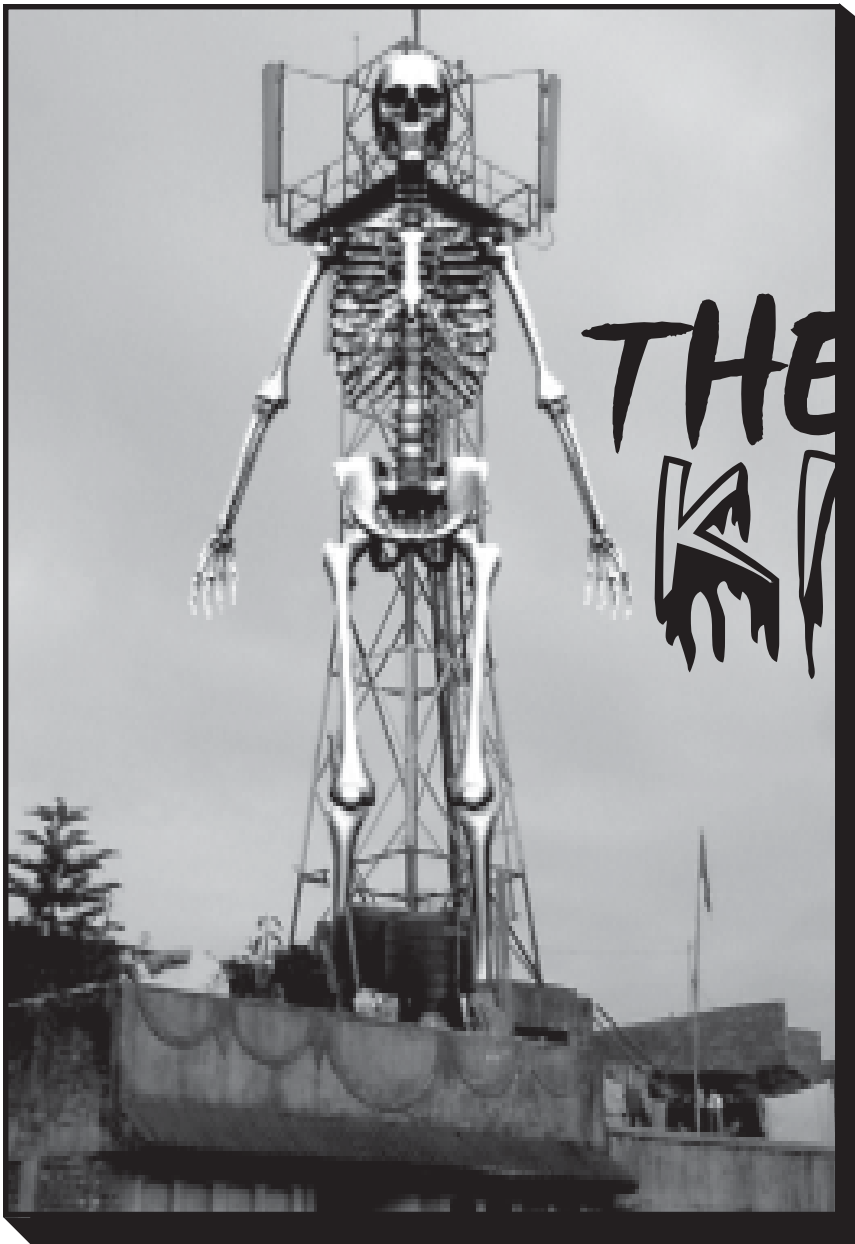
week to meet with friends or go and see a film in the theatre. Even though not burdened with as much homework as the juniors, the senior girls are stressed with the looming final exams and at times it seems that there are not enough hours in the day to accommodate for their thirst of knowledge. Befitted with comfortable lodging, that provides them with food, laundry service and shelter, the girls feel very comfortable and homely

here. For them and many like them, the cost of schooling here is less expensive than in the plains and in the big Indian cities, but much more expensive than for students from the region. The cost of living on full-board for a month comes to 2500 INR, about 30 000 INR a year. An estimated 70 percent of the ICSE students studying here are classified as outstation students. Using yet again the Rockvale Academy as an example, where 1200 children of which the estimated 70 percent are hypothetical outstation students;

Hypothesis 3

70 percent of 1200 students = 0.70 x 1200 = 840 students
840 students x 30 000 INR yearly full boarding fee = 25, 2 million INR

The schools are definitely the backbone of the economic prosperity of the city of Kalimpong, as the children consume overwhelming amounts. This consumption provides for a big part of the residents, who are connected in various degrees to the schools, with a comfortable income. As the classroom sizes get bigger every year as more students, especially from outside the region pour in, the conditions for more private money-making in tuition can only go up. With a strong and prestigious reputation in education, sometimes it is not how many students receive their diplomas, but the degree of their success, as reputations can change in the blink of an eye, when negative word of mouth spreads. What is beneficial for the children studying in the various schools in Kalimpong, is beneficial in the end for the whole community. Even though the long winter holiday seems only to have negative effects on the community, its timing has saved the city from total disaster in the past years. With the number of water users going up annually, perhaps it is better to focus on solving the problem of water first, which after all affects every member of society, no matter where their income comes from. A good debate is called for to discuss how Kalimpong could benefit more from the schools without endangering the water supply, so that it can continue to be a landmark in education and an environment where children feel safe and homely. □



THE SILENT KILLER

By Monila De

Our late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's effort to control the burgeoning population of India lost her the elections. Her method of birth control was met with stubborn resistance and rejected by the public. Little did she know when she died that not only a novel method of birth control but of reducing the population of India, was in the making.

During Indira's time, men were bribed with transistor radios to undergo sterilization but now no such coercion is necessary. People are only too eager to own a cell phone, the greatest status symbol of all times. They have not the slightest knowledge of the health hazard these possess. The cell phone's proximity to the body can cause impotence in men and can cause many other damages to the body. Isn't this a much much simpler method than having to go through

an operation and receiving a cheap little transistor as a gift???

Alas, if only Indira was in power now, she would have distributed cell phones to all men free of cost and probably would have even made the Sim card free!!! I am sure men, who once shied away from such an operation believing that they would lose their ability to produce a son after the umpteenth daughter and also lose their virility, would queue up in the thousands to receive this new weapon against potency, called the cell phone. What better method of birth control than a Nation full of impotent men who can neither produce children nor resort to rape...

In this modern world of communication technology, cell phones play a huge part and have come to stay. People are dependent on them for various reasons but most of all in an emergency. Unfortunately the cell phone despite all its mobility is of little use in an emergency, especially in Kalimpong. Inevitably every time you try to make a call, particularly in an urgent situation,

either the line is “busy” or the phone one is trying to call “out of range”.

To remedy these malfunctions, the cell phone companies are vying with each other to install cell phone towers on every vantage point of Kalimpong. They are indeed serving cell phone owners better, not only by improving the quality of communication but by annihilating them totally. Kalimpong is being turned into a killing field.

The modernizing of India in the form of cell phone transmitting towers in close proximity to human habitation spells disaster. These towers emitting electromagnetic radiation in the form of radio frequency waves are not seen, felt, heard or smelt. They are the silent killers invading your home and environment. One cannot possibly run away or hide from them. They are everywhere, working ceaselessly twenty four hours a day, everyday silently doing their job of killing you softly.

The lethal towers radiate such powerful RF electromagnetic energy that not only humans but birds, beasts and plants are all at risk. Those at closer proximity of 200 to 300 meters are most affected.

If the cell phone is responsible for causing impotency in men, the towers finish the job of birth control by reducing fertility in women and animals and give to miscarriage very often.

The worst hit by these radio frequency are the children. Their tender bodies and tiny heads attract RF waves much more. They are prone to develop childhood leukemia apart from memory loss, behaviour changes, difficulty in concentration, slow down of motor skills, headaches, depression, loss of sleep, retarded learning and many more aberrations will certainly come to the fore as they grow up bombarded by these RF waves. These are findings by scientists from all over the world. Not mere conjecture. So be aware....

It has been scientifically proved by scientists all over the world that RF waves emitted by the cell phone

towers effect humans and have long term health hazards.

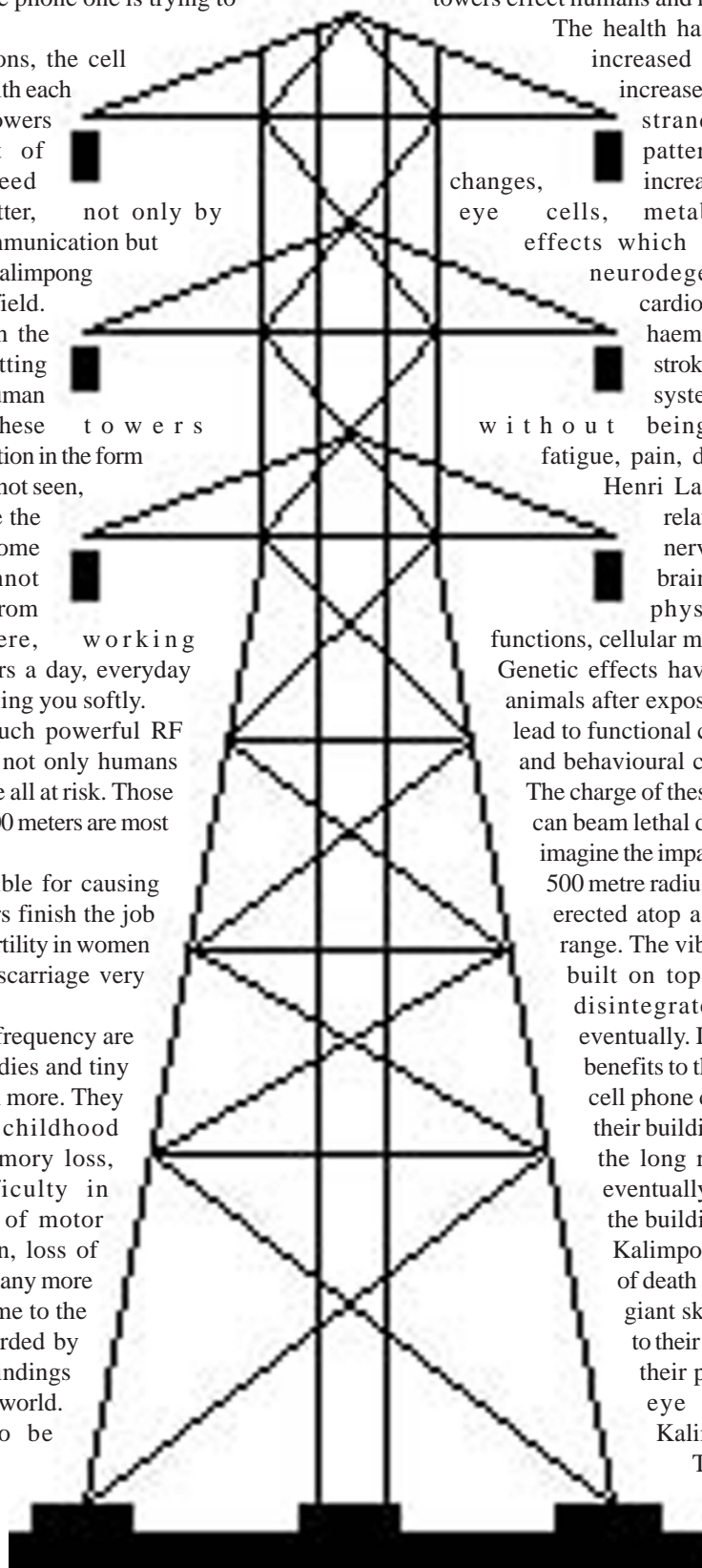
The health hazards are numerous, such as increased cell growth of brain cancer, increased breaks in double and single strand DNA, changes in sleep pattern, headaches, neurological increased blood pressure, damage to eye cells, metabolic changes, cytogenic effects which affect cancer, Alzheimer, neurodegenerative disease, cardiovascular problems, rash, brain haemorrhage, epilepsy, nose bleed, strokes, break down of the immunity system will attract diseases even without being infected by HIV, muscle fatigue, pain, dizziness and depression. Dr.

Henri Lai's review states that RF of relative low intensity can affect the nervous system, change in blood brain barrier, morphology, electro physiology, neurotransmitter functions, cellular metabolism and calcium efflux. Genetic effects have been reported in brains of animals after exposure to RF. These changes can lead to functional changes in the nervous system and behavioural changes.

The charge of these towers are phenomenal, they can beam lethal doses of radiation for miles. So imagine the impact it has on people living within 500 metre radius of these killer towers. A tower erected atop a mountain has an even better range. The vibrations are so powerful that if built on top of a building the concrete disintegrates and turns into rubble eventually. In the short term, the monetary benefits to the building owner for allowing cell phone companies to install towers on their building top may be attractive but in the long run these very towers would eventually lead to the total collapse of the building.

Kalimpong is dotted with these towers of death and destruction. They look like giant skeletons, an ominous reminder to their victims of their fate. Apart from their powers of destruction they are eye sores turning beautiful Kalimpong in an ugly hill station.

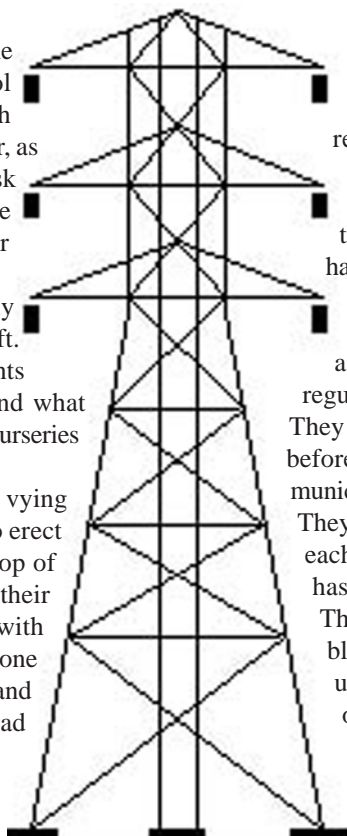
The latest tower soaring into the skies on Atisha Road, is in a thickly populated residential area. There are at least twelve childrens'



hostels and this road, an Old Age Home and the St. Joseph's Convent, St. Augustines' School and the St. Philomena School teeming with children, are all within 300 meters of this tower, as the crow flies. These children are at high risk while parents and teachers are oblivious of the risks that these towers pose to the future of their children.

The first to be hit are the birds but they can fly away to safer places, that is, if any are still left. Humans are stuck to their fate, so are the plants and trees. Livestock are just as vulnerable and what will happen to the flourishing Cacti and Flower nurseries is yet to be seen.

The simple and naïve people of Kalimpong are vying with each other to get cell phone companies to erect their transmitting towers on their land or on top of their houses for a pittance, thereby, signing their death warrants. The houses that they build with their hard earned money will soon disintegrate one day and their children, if they are still alive and well, will curse them for leaving them with a load of rubble.



The cell phone companies come here to build their towers without informing the residents about the hazards within a radius of 500 metres and taking responsibilities of their future health. As for the municipality, they are riding on a prosperous band wagon and therefore, grant them permission only too eagerly without informing the residents of the hazards and taking their permission to build the towers.

The cell phone companies will vehemently deny any ill effects that the towers will cause and declare them absolutely safe. They disregard all rules and regulations of planting them in heavily populated areas. They are obliged to take permission from the residents before constructing a tower, which they never do. The municipality turns a blind eye and readily gives permission. They are obliged to take permission from the residents of each ward and area covered before giving the NOC. But has this ever been done in Kalimpong???

The residents of Kalimpong are being led to the gallows blind folded like animals in the name of progress. Wake up, it is for you to decide whether you want progress or health. It will be far quicker, easier and painless exit from this world if you go and jump into the Teesta instead. □

Your suggestions regarding all articles printed in this issue may be sent to the Editor, Himalayan Times, Post Box 49, Kalimpong or you may e-mail tthe to himalayantimes@rediffmail.com

FUTURE OF KALIMPONG



Zoya & Zaya Mukhia
Date of birth 8th of July 2003

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THEIR WORDS OUR VOCABULARY

By Dr.S.B. Wangyel

Today we will consider the etymologies of the terms used for various edifices. Let us commence with a rather interesting house called the 'girja' or the Christian church. The early Portuguese traders and settlers in India brought the word to the sub-continent. Their 'igreja' eventually became our 'girja'. We will make a small digression for an amusing story relating to a 'girja'. A certain Maulvi, renowned for the power of his curses, was called upon by his fellow Muslims to curse church built in close proximity to their Masjid. The man, not prepared to let his followers down and at the same time not willing to cause offense to the British rulers went about thus: "Gir ja ghar! Gir ja!" His followers interpreted it as "Fall down, house! Fall down, house! Fall down!" while the Englishmen thought the Maulvi was saying, "Church-house! Church-house! Church!" Now let us consider a more mundane construction, the 'kar-khana'. This refers to a place where mechanical work is carried out but it was not so in the beginning. Initially it was a place where business was carried out and the Persian 'kar-khana' from which we inherited the word actually translated as 'business place'. Having gone through the houses of work and worship let us now turn our attention to edifices of administration and amusement, the 'darbar' and the 'gymkhana'. 'Darbar' to us a royal place but in the Persian, from which we obtained the word, it is a court or levee. It was a place where the Mughal/Shah sat daily and received or entertained visitors, accepted petitions and presents, and issued important orders of the day. In my limited understanding of the Nepali language I was always under the impression that 'darbar', as a place, had been accepted into the vocabulary but was surprised to find the word not entered in Parasmani's Nepali-Nepali-English dictionary but I did find some consolation in his insertion 'darbariya' for 'relating to Darbar or palace'. Kings and Mughals remind me of armies (see the forth essay in this series), fortresses and garrisons. For the last two terms we have 'gari' as exemplified by Nagarkote (Nepal), Nagari (Darjeeling) and Damsanggari (Kalimpong) but the word being of Sanskrit origin we will pass it. The other word for a fort/garrison is 'killa'. The parent word for it is the Arabic 'kal-a' which became 'kil-a' and thence 'kila' to the Hindi speakers. We generously added another 'l' to arrive at 'killa'. For a rare diversion let us ponder over a word that will not be found in Nepali dictionaries: 'Gymkhana'. Being such an important address in Darjeeling it is worth a consideration. The word was coined around the 1840s but whether it was British gentry or the Indian servants who were responsible for it is unsure. The term it is believed originated in Mumbai, Bombay then, and it referred to the house or the club where the Europeans went to play games. The sporting events like billiards, cricket, squash and tennis were played at the club and since all these sports were ball games the club was designated 'gend-khana', which in Hindi translated as 'ball-house'. Gradually this took on a much wider meaning and a newer pronunciation of 'gymkhana'. Finally, let us round off with a strange word: 'dewal' for the English wall. Wirk's Nepali thesaurus Sahi Shabda giving us the following alternative: 'garo', 'parkhal', 'prakar', 'prachir', 'wapra', and 'sal' to which I would like to add 'bhitta' and despite these many choices we still prefer to use 'dewal'. So how did this word sneak in to our speech? My guess is that when the British were erecting embankments they would refer to it as 'the wall' and this had to be constructed along all the roads leading from Siliguri to our towns and villages. In the towns most of the houses required retaining wall to be raised and the constant repetition of the words 'the wall' became the Nepali 'de-wall' and finally 'dewal'.

**Dr.S.B. Wangyel's latest book
"Footprints in the Himalaya"
is available in all leading book
stalls in Darjeeling, Kalimpong,
Gangtok & Siliguri**

Water scarcity has come to become the biggest of all the problems that the Hills of Darjeeling faces today. Severe shortage of water for domestic purposes as well as for agricultural use is faced by the residents each year and the gravity of the problem is increasing each year. But water harvesting can solve the problem without much expenses involved writes Mr. R.P.Sharma.



WATER HARVESTING

Rural and Urban Areas

Darjeeling being a hilly region, the scarcity of water exists throughout the year excepting in the rainy season. This scarcity is felt in the field of drinking purpose, domestic use, irrigation purposes and for fulfilling the needs of animals. Water scarcity is being faced very acutely in densely populated and industrial areas of Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong. Though different agencies such as Municipality and the P.H.E. are continuously trying to solve the water scarcity problem, yet there is a necessity for a permanent solution in the region. Present sources or available designs which will be implemented soon, are also not sufficient to fulfill these requirements. Attempts have failed in preparing big projects due to involvement of huge funds. Insufficient importance is being given to schemes involving less times and small expenditures. In the hilly region schemes for collection and distribution of water are being taken as primary work, yet it is seen that proper attention and assistance has not been given in the grass root level. Through water scarcity is in the entire district, this scarcity is acute in the rural areas. While noticing that less attention is being given to preparing general principle to solve the problem, a doubtful situation is being seen because most attempts and sources have been earmarked for the Municipal areas of Darjeeling town and the other Sub-Divisional towns. In this context it is of utmost importance for taking development schemes of small and local sources by collecting and utilizing water.

Among all other sources, collection and utilization of rain water from roof top is one of the sources. We are aware of the facts that it is not a big problem to make water available in the Darjeeling hill areas because the rainfall here occurs on an average for about 225 days of a year. The main challenge is to make this rain water available for human use rather than letting

it go waste. The water from the sloped roofs of hilly houses definitely falls faster than the water falling in flat roof of the plains. The water falling from the roofs can easily be collected in gutters first. Then an additional expenditure will be required to use the water available from the gutter. Hence, schemes should be prepared for individual community for collection of water. For this community based schemes are necessary. The following materials are essential for taking up this type of scheme.

1. Iron / Plastic tank.
2. 'U' shaped galvanized iron drain to join the lower side of gutter for draining the water downwards towards the collection tank.
3. Plastic/ Cast iron pipes to be joined to the collecting tank.
4. Construction of community reservoirs to distribute the water to at least 10 to 12 houses.
5. Man-hole covers for the reservoirs.
6. Chlorination of the water from time to time.

Since this type of scheme is prepared specially for collection of rain water, it is necessary to see the related data of rain fall in the different seasons in the region. The rainfall data from 1998 to 2000 of Darjeeling District Sub-Division wise are as follows:-

Year	Darjeeling	Kurseong	Kalimpong
1998	2803.94mm	3973.55mm	2445.59mm
1999	2716.89mm	2378.83mm	4120.01mm
2000	2153.10mm	3366.40mm	1641.28mm
Average	2556. 90mm	3239.50mm	2635.60mm

Therefore on seeing the records of rainfall of the above 3 years, the average rainfall record can be found out. Similarly it can be calculated what amount of water has been received by each house as well as further requirement to meet the total requirement of water for domestic use during the crisis period.

By local enquiry it has been confirmed that on an average each house uses two bundles of G.C.I. Sheet measuring 8 X 21 feet, the total area of G.C.I. Sheet will be 16 feet X 21 feet i.e. 332 sq

DARJEELING/WATER HARVESTING

ft (approx) and converting into meter, the area of the roof will be $4.87\text{m} \times 6.40\text{m} = 31.168\text{ sq mt}$.

Now, supposing the area of each house is 31.168 sq. mt. we can calculate the water availability of rain water for each house.

For Kalimpong Sub-Division:

Average annual rainfall=2635.60mm or 2.635m. Therefore, on the basis of the roof area, the following rules can be applied for calculating water that can be collected by each house.

$$4.78\text{m} \times 6.40\text{m} \times 2.635\text{m} \times 1000 = 80609.92\text{ lts.}$$

Therefore, in Kalimpong Sub-Division the water availed by a house out of the average annual rainfall is 80,610 liters.

Again, if we calculate on percentage basis, the annual requirement of water-for a family of 6 persons can be fulfilled by only 26% of rain water received from their own roof. While considering the requirement for the dry season averaging 150 days, only 11% of total roof water will be necessary.

Supposing the requirement of water for one person in a day is 10 liters, the requirement of water for a family of six person can be known as $10 \times 6 = 60\text{ lts}$. Therefore, requirement of water annually for a family of six person will be $60 \times 365 = 21,900\text{ lts}$. The scarcity of water in the dry season will be very acute however in rainy season, scarcity will not be faced.

Hence, annual requirement of water for such family is found to be 27% & of the total water collected from the roof of the particular house. On the other hand, if we suppose that the family needs water only in dry season, 11% of water available from roof top will be required for that family. Let us think that the quantity of water shown above is available from the roof of one house, if the water collected from the roof of 10 houses, the availability of water will be increased by 10 times. This calculation exhibits a very simple and easy method to collect and store rain water. If we store the rain water in the above said systematic manner, it can solve the long pending problem of scarcity of water in our hill district and a permanent and less expensive solution is possible.

However, it is necessary to construct a tank wherein the excess water from the rainy season can be stored and utilized during the scarcity period or dry seasons. But accounting for the uncertain rainfall during the year, it is necessary to construct such a tank which has the capacity of a minimum of 10,000



WATER HARVESTING

liters. It should have the capacity to fulfill the requirement of a ten family community and it should be able to fulfill the requirement of the said community in case of rainfall not occurring continuously for 17 days.

Similarly, incase formation of a community is not possible or if it is not possible to construct 10,000 lts tank due to lack of such land, it is necessary to construct smaller tanks for personal interest of a family consisting of six members having the capacity of 1500lts.

But when water is stored for longer periods, many questions regarding disinfection arise, for this purpose it is found

that one table of chlorine or 8-10 drops of Jeoline 2000 will be able to purify one liter of water. Hence we find that even stored water can be used without much fear.

For rural and urban Schools:

Most of the schools situated in urban or rural areas in all hilly regions have slanting roofs generally made of corrugated sheets. If a 'U' shaped pipe is affixed along the open end of the slope of such a roof, in a way that the entire rain water drains into it and from there it is conveyed through a pipe and discharged into a reservoir, the rain water would be collected into the reservoir instead of flowing into drains. This is an example of one of the method of water harvesting. Water harvesting means capturing rain water at the place it falls. If it is not captured it would run off and will finally reach the sea without being used and will thus be wasted. Prevention of this wastage is water harvesting. Water harvesting also means taking measures so that the water to be harvested is not polluted hence the need to keep the catchment area free of polluting activities.

Water harvesting can be done anywhere. In fact it is a necessity in areas where rainfall is low. In these areas, it does not rain for almost ten months and even during the two months of the rainy season it rains scantily. In other areas where rainfall is normal or even plentiful, it is mostly confined to the monsoon season and has to depend upon the uncertainties of the monsoon. In these areas too there is a scarcity of water during the dry months. Accordingly the supply of water is curtailed

during these months but its demand rises, as water is needed not only for usual human consumption but also for irrigation. Water harvesting caters to this demand.

Water harvesting can be done in various ways. One way as already mentioned, is to capture run off water from rooftops. Even from flat and horizontal rooftops run off can be captured. No ingenious methods are required for doing that, simple innovations and common sense will fill the bill. The intention is not to let the water run off but to capture it for future use. One way is to capture it from rooftops. A second way is to capture it in the catchment areas by storing it in a pond, lake or well. A third way is to capture flood waters from local streams. A fourth is to store water through watershed management. The simplest of these ways is to build drains around an area. The rain that falls in the area would obviously go into these drains and the drains should convey the rain water and discharge it into a pit or huge well, where it will be stored for future use. It could be used for drinking, bathing, irrigation or for recharging the water table or for any other purpose.

It will thus be seen that water harvesting depends upon the total quantity of rainfall in an area. This quantity is known as the rainwater endowment of the area. Now all of this quantity cannot be harvested for the quantity harvested depends upon collection efficiency. If the total quantity of rainfall measured in millimeters is multiplied by collection efficiency, the product obtained is known as the water harvesting potential. Water harvesting potential will always be less than the total rainfall because collection efficiency cannot be 100 per cent. It is less than the total rainfall because of first flush wastage, evaporation, spillage etc.

Now suppose a primary school has a flat roof having a terrace area of 100 square metres and that the annual rain fall in the area is 30 inches, i.e. 0.9 metres, the total rain water that would be available for collection would be 100×0.9 or 90 cubic metres. Further, suppose the collection efficiency is 70 per cent the amount of water harvested would be 90×0.7 cubic metres or 63 cubic metres or 63,000 liters. Since a school works



WATER HARVESTING

for about 220 days in a year, the harvested water available for consumption would be 286 liters per day. If this school has an enrolment of 140 pupils and teachers, each person would be able to consume 2 liters of water per day which is sufficient to cater to the school needs.

School in urban can do much better for they have access to technology for water harvesting and recycling. They can get technical advice from the Government as well as from NGO's. The real problem is in rural areas and small schools because they do not have the required funds to undertake construction work. They cannot afford even a filtration plant.

They have therefore to depend upon self-help. The administrative control of all schools in the Darjeeling Hills falls under the jurisdiction of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council, therefore the Education Department of the DGHC, should give emphasis to water harvesting schemes in all schools. On the other hand the pupil and teachers themselves can dig pits to store water. People from their village can also help them in the digging operations. If they can collect some funds for the purchase of bricks and cement, they can very possibly build a pakka tank. Those who succeed in collecting funds for building two tanks, they may build them in such a way that the height of one tank is more than the second. The tanks may be connected in such a way that the water from the upper part of the higher tank flows down by gravity into the lower tank. Water harvesting can thus be done in rural primary and middle high school too with just a little bit of initiative.

There are two such schemes which are already in existence at Jr. B.T. Institute Kalimpong and at the Water Works. P.H.E. Office, East Main Road Kalimpong.

If everyone in this hilly region starts these types of projects, the land slide of different area too would be controlled as rain water would not be allowed to flow on the surface eroding the top soil thereby causing landslides. □

Darjeeling

By Rhoderick Chalmers



There are only two seasons in Darjeeling - high and low, or more often just 'season' and 'off-season'. Despite the disruption caused by political instability in the 1980s, Darjeeling remains economically dependent on the crowds of tourists who flock here in spring and autumn. For the two seasons each come twice a year and high summer and winter will find the hotels, lodges and guest houses equally as abandoned as they are packed for their four months of peak business. Founded by the British in the late 1830s as a 'sanatorium' which soon became a fashionable hill station Darjeeling has in some ways changed little in the last century and a half, yet in other ways has reinvented and reasserted itself.

Whatever the season, the best place to start is Chowrasta. Or stop, for that matter, because the inviting benches that ring the wide promenade offer perhaps the finest opportunity in India to simply sit down and watch life go by. In season you may have to wait for a seat but you'll be offered a tea or coffee by one of the wandering vendors almost immediately. And seeing as wherever you're staying in this town you've almost certainly had to walk uphill to get here you may well be glad of the sticky-sweet energy booster. In anything but the hottest months it will also take the chill out of the morning or evening breeze.

Of course Chowrasta normally smells but that's not the fault of the town street-sweepers. Chowrasta is the assembly point for the Tibetans' ponies that offer visitors the chance to make a slow, and decidedly unadventurous, horseback tour of various sights along a well-plodded circuit. They're just the ever-present foreground to an eclectic mix of buildings ranging from fast-food joints catering to the Indian tourist market to long-established (and eccentric) shops such as Habeeb Mullick's curio emporium and the Oxford bookstore. On the northern side the ground rises to the Observatory Hill viewpoint while to the south the main drag of the Mall (strictly speaking Nehru Road, but the old name is still in use) descends gently towards the busier parts of town.

Beside you on the benches will be plenty of other visitors from out of town. The bulk of tourists still come from Calcutta and other towns of West Bengal but there are plenty from further afield in India as well as from overseas. Chowrasta is also a stop for many locals on a morning or evening walk while a popular hangout for schoolchildren on their lunchbreak or lingering after the final bell and before the walk home. From stately Tibetan matrons who survey with a proprietorial eye to retiring retired gentlemen who slowly peruse their newspapers, Chowrasta can give you a glimpse of much of Darjeeling.

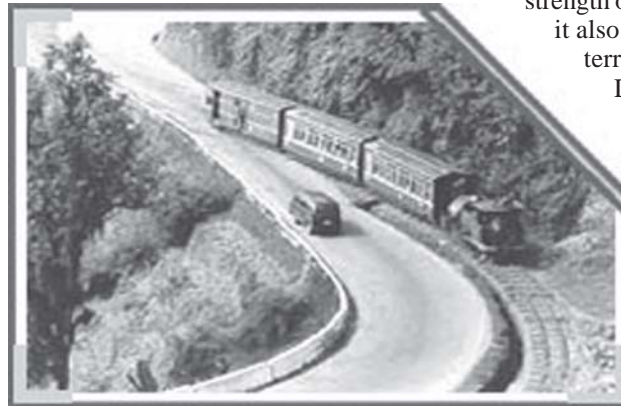
But not all. Nowadays boys use the statue of Bhanubhakta that dominates the end of the promenade as an oversized

wicket for impromptu cricket games. Yet while most visitors, as a local writer recently lamented, pass by with barely a glance, this statue is no forgotten remnant of a distant past. More than any other monument in a town which is littered with reminders of bygone days, this statue is a key to the history of Darjeeling. Not of its founding, nor of the achievements of its original colonial overlords, but of the people who built the town, worked in it and who still struggle for a degree of recognition and autonomy. For the story of Darjeeling is not just of stylish sahibs and memsahibs strolling down their carefully sculpted avenues. Much more it is a story of a frontier town, of the hardship of poor economic migrants fighting for a foothold in a new land and of cultural and social accomplishments more remarkable than any fancy hotel the British built. Darjeeling, and the tract of land around it, is normally described as a 'gift' made by the king of Sikkim to British India in 1835. Certainly the king's seal was on the grant of land but the process by which that seal was obtained was a cunning piece of freelance skulduggery by an 'enterprising' British officer.

There were formidable obstacles to establishing any kind of settlement at Darjeeling. Set atop a ridge in dangerously inhospitable mountains that had in recent times been a battleground for Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, it took an immense amount of time, effort, money and lost lives just to establish a rough road to supply the small garrison of pioneers that had assembled by 1839. Labourers were brought in from the eastern hills of Nepal to undertake the backbreaking carrying and construction tasks and when commercial tea-growing started in the 1850s the imported labour was again Nepalese. The British military policy of recruiting Nepalese 'Gurkha' soldiers into the Indian army led to the establishment of a recruitment centre in nearby Ghoom by the turn of the century.

Thus the overwhelming majority of the population was, and remains, ethnically Nepalese although Indian by nationality. And indeed many of the foundations of modern Nepal's identity were fashioned by the Nepalese population in India. Bhanubhakta is now universally recognised as Nepali's 'founder poet' but the first celebrations of his birth anniversary were held outside Nepal and four years later in 1949 the first statue of the poet was erected in the same place. In Chowrasta, Darjeeling. For in its golden days, or golden decades as the period stretched from the beginning of this century until the sixties, Darjeeling was a centre of literary and cultural production to eclipse Kathmandu.

Yet Indians of Nepali ethnic origin were never allowed to feel secure in the country of their birth. Referred to by many Indians as 'foreigners' even after generations of settlement in India, Indian-Nepalis were expelled in their thousands from north-eastern states, culminating in the early 1980s. Darjeeling was about to experience its own revolution.



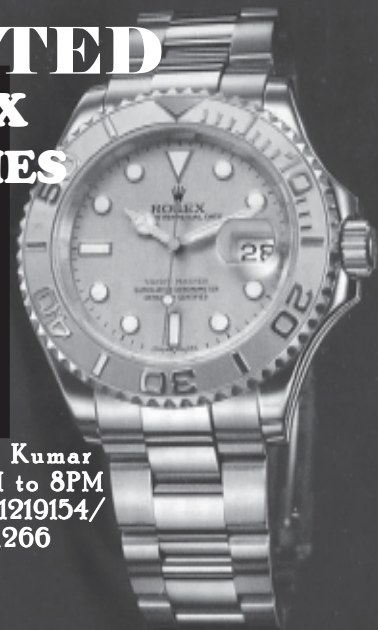
Decades of anger and frustration at the lack of recognition of the Nepali majority's language and citizenship status was channelled into the Gorkhaland movement. A mass movement that demonstrated the political strength of the Indian-Nepali community, it also brought two years of violence, terror and economic devastation to

Darjeeling. Shutting the area to tourists and crippling much of local business and industry, Darjeeling is still recovering from the impact of the movement, although enjoying a degree of hard-won local autonomy.

And if you can't see this at first glance in the eyes of Bhanubhakta on Chowrasta then you can ponder it in the very existence of the statue. A claim to recognition which was itself vandalised in 1991 by Gorkhaland extremists who saw it as a link to a foreign country (Nepal), it speaks of both past struggles and the fresh wounds which have yet to heal in Darjeeling's communities. And it may help explain why there's less of a spring in the lordly stride of the Indian inheritors of this queen of hill stations. □

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The Diocese of Darjeeling

The Diocese of Darjeeling was erected on August 8th, 1962, and was formed by separating Darjeeling District from the Church of Calcutta, and joining it to the Prefecture Apostolic of Sikkim. In November 1997 the church in the sub-division of Siliguri was separated from Darjeeling Diocese to form the new diocese of Bagdogra. The present Darjeeling Diocese consists of the three hill sub-divisions of Darjeeling, the State of Sikkim and the Kingdom of Bhutan.

The Church first came to Darjeeling with the Irish Loreto Sisters in 1846, soon after the opening of the hill station of Darjeeling. The area was then under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Bishop Hartman of Patna diocese and was staffed by Capuchins, who were mostly Italians. In 1886, when the hierarchy was established in India, the area comprising the present sub-divisions of Darjeeling, Kurseong and Siliguri and the State of Sikkim was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Calcutta and came under the care of the Jesuits from Belgium.

In 1889, a theologate for the Society of Jesus called St. Mary's College was started at Kurseong. Up to the end of 1971, when it was transferred to Delhi, the College contributed much to the expansion work in the district. Memorable among the missionaries of that time are Father M. Wéry who worked in Kurseong from 1932 to 1957, and is known today as the 'Apostle of the Nepalese', and Father A. Bossaerts who started the first station in the terai at Gayaganga in 1933 where he died in 1945, after years of service to the tribal labourers brought from Chota Nagpur to work on the tea gardens in the plains.

In 1946, the English-speaking Jesuits of the Upper Canada Province came to the assistance of the Belgian Jesuits. They gradually took over the administration of the area, and in 1956 the Darjeeling Region of the Calcutta Province was created, and this became a province of the Society of Jesus in 1997.

Kalimpong & Sikkim

In the Kalimpong area, work started in 1883, when the Fathers of the Foreign Missions of Paris settled down in Pedong with the hope of getting into Tibet via the Chumbi Valley. The Kalimpong sub-division, which was then known as 'British Bhutan', was attached to the Vicariate Apostolic of Lhasa and named 'Southern Tibet Mission'. Prominent among the French Missionaries and a pioneer and scholar in Tibetan, was Fr A. Desgodins, who founded Pedong.

In 1929, the territory was separated from Tibet to form an Independent Mission within the ecclesiastical province of Calcutta. In 1931, Sikkim was added to it and thus the 'Prefecture Apostolic of Kalimpong-Sikkim' came into existence, with Msgr Jules Douhanel as its first Prefect Apostolic.



Bishop Stephen Lepcha, Darjeeling

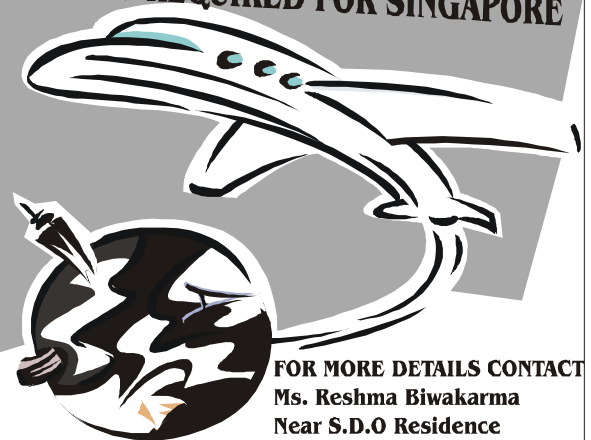
In 1935, the French Fathers handed the files over to the Canons Regular of Swiss Congregation of St Maurice of Agaune ("CR's"), and in 1937, Msgr Aurelio Gianora was appointed its new Prefect Apostolic. Twenty five years later, in 1962, he handed the territory over to Bishop Eric Benjamin, the First Bishop of the newly erected diocese.

Bhutan

The Kingdom of Bhutan was separated from the Diocese of Tezpur and included in the Diocese of Darjeeling in 1975 by a Decree of the S.C. for the Evangelization of Peoples ('Qua Facilius' No. 217/75, 20.1.1975) □

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FACTS ON DARJEELING

Extracted from the popular book
Fallen Cicadas written by
Barun Roy & Sanjay Das

In 1932-33 the population of the Darjeeling Municipality was 19,903. L.G. Pinel and S. Sanyal were Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively. The four ex-officio commissioners were Major S.A. Max (Civil Surgeon), J. Chambers (Executive Engineer), F. W. Kid, (Police Superintendent) and F. J. Hut (Deputy Conservator). Among the non-governmental members were Rev. Frederick, J.D. Caldera, Rev. K. S. Peters, Khan Bahadur D. F. A. Aziz, Ramdas Prasad and T. P. Banerjee. The 18 duly elected Municipal Commissioners were: Ward No. 1 (Ghoom) R. Sen, Ward No. 2 (Collington) Sachidanand Sanyal, Ward No. 3 (Woodlands) A. A. Price and Padam Prasad Pradhan, Ward No. 4 (Chandmari – China Town) Jitendranath Mitra, Harenchandra Bose, Ward No. 5 (Butcher Bustee) Haney Hingan, Ward No. 6 (Rochville) Dr. S. N. Chatterjee and (Capstan) G. Ranhas Hardy, Ward NO. 7 (Market Square) Rai Sahib Bhuwanmohan Chatterjee and Niranjan Sen, Ward No. 8 (Birch Hill) Sardar Bahadur S. W. Laden La, D.E. Avari, S. Thapa and F. W. Betman, Ward No. 9 (Bhutia Bustee) W. V. Laden La, Ward No. 10 (Kutchery) Rai ,Sahib Hari Prasad Pradhan.

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ANSWER TO JUMBLE PRINTED IN VOL 3 ISS 4

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BRAIN Teasers

With
Suraj Mani Pradhan



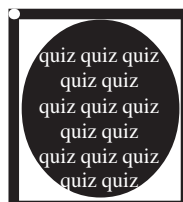
1. On whose death did Mahatma Gandhi write under the Caption "A **National Loss**," in his editorial of "Young India" on 13th November 1924??
2. Who founded the General Buddhist Association of the Darjeeling District in 1907 and became its first President?
3. If "Thunder Bolt" became the 1st Team from Kalimpong to lift the prestigious Hurley Memorial Cup football tournament in 1954, which team from Kalimpong lifted the same trophy in 1957 & 1958
4. 2005 marked the 50th anniversary of the scaling of which mountain?
5. When was Kalimpong raised to the status of a Sub Division?

Answers to questions in the last issue

1. Rammohanpur (North Bengal university)
2. D.B.Pariyar
3. The Green Oscars
4. Louis Mandelli
5. Kolkata

Rush in your entries alongwith the coupon below to our office latest by 20th April 2007 to win a sleek Parker Pen.

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jumble

W	A	F	S	N	K	B	A	S	U	R	I	Y
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D	H	A	M	P	U	I	A	R	A	M	L	I

Hidden in the above jumble are the names of fifteen local musical instruments (including those comprising the Naumati bazza)(eg. Tyamco). You are required to find them out and send us your correct entry in a separate sheet of paper (please do not tear the above, you may xerox the above if you want).

Please send in your entry with the coupon given below by the 20th April 2007 to win a fabulous gift hamper sponsored by Himalayan Times (Nepali). The correct answers for the jumble published in the last issue is given on page number 18.

The winner will be decided by a draw of lots. The names of all those who sent in correct answers for the jumble in the last issue are Shyam Kumar Lohar, Bihdantha Subba, Yangchen Bhutia, Dilkumari Chhetri, Deomaya Sundas, Gurudas, Ravi Mangar, Sudip Rai, Sonam Karthak, Biraj Pradhan, Susan Lepcha, Stephene Lepcha, Sanjay Basor, Peter Lama, Gyatri Mukhia, S.K. Pradhan, Mumhad Alimuddin, Kapil Thami, Mandira Rai, Joseph Lepcha, Sushma Chhetri, Parijat, Aunradha Sharma, Binita Poudyal, Girish Mukhia, and the lucky winner is-

Sangita Tuladhar of Darjeeling

Please submit your entry in a plain sheet of paper alongwith this coupon. Please do not tear this page to submit your entry.



**jumble
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THE FOUNDER-HEADMASTER OF ST. GEORGE'S HIGH SCHOOL GILBERT KALU SINGH

By Dr. Dick B. Dewan

Pedong, an historical tiny town since the days of the British raj, is placidly situated to the north-east of Kalimpong town at the distance of 21 kms away in terms of the metalled road paved in the early fifties of the last century. For the traders, office-goers and football-match players it had to be but within their walking distance, before the fifties, as they were bound to shuttle to and fro on the same day for their intent purpose. Those were not the days of wheels to roll on the pitched-route except for the lousy bull-carts, mules and trudgers who were hell bent on going to Kalimpong for their unavoidable requirements. As Pedong was awfully deficient in respect of so many needful things and services it had to be dependent on Kalimpong. To be away from Kalimpong it was like to be away from availing of facilities. Far from the madding crowd, Pedong was in such a poor shape. Notwithstanding, it was endeavouring on its own meagre resources as a humble beginning in every sphere.

Pedong was not an obscure land of course, it perhaps claimed its rank next only to Kalimpong in the matter of importance. Owing to its geographical situation and strategic location Pedong ever drew the attention of the then administration. It was the place in Kalimpong sub-division where British troops under Major Waddel had camped, it was a suitable halting-station for the Indo-Tibetan traders and muleteers and certainly for the local guardians of law and order, being the last border check-post of the state. Can't we also say that Pedong was a spiritual centre for having possessed a number of Buddhist monasteries of different sects in one of which monastic education was imparted to would-be priests. There was a temple for Hindu adherents and of course an imposing R.C. church of Gothic style, all for a spiritual care. But as regard to intellectual care and thereby for nourishment there was no access beyond M.E. school provided to the natives by the R.C. mission enterprise. The district or the state administration hardly bothered to show any concern for nourishing unlettered mass with mental diet. There was no any other organisation capable of taking up the moral responsibility to enlighten the people of this backward region and to elevate them in the scale of mental apart from the society of the R.C. mission. Only the Christian priests (fathers)

of this society had turned up in the field and were operating the machinery within their limited resources trying hard to combine heads and hearts of the crude local youths for a synthesis of human development. Should we call it teaching through preaching ? In any case teaching was going on although in not so steady manner as the management was suffering from want of adequate fund capacity and acutely short supply of teachers those days, in the late forties.

The socio-cultural milieu of those days presented a sordid picture. The local inhabitants were still not fully awakened from their deep age-old slumber of ignorance. Their response to the call of any kind of formal learning would be even less than lukewarm as they would rigidly resist to any amount of coaxing and cajoling. Only so negligible percentage of them would care to attend regular classes due particularly to their poor socio-economic condition and lack of exposure. That was the time when a little bit of knowledge in the rudiments of reading and writing was reckoned to be enough for eking out livelihood by picking up some easily available jobs of the departments. Passing out class six standard was more than enough to fetch a promising job and salary. The on-going second world-war drew so many man-power and resources opening an astounding opportunities that a school had to bear the brunt. But after the great war ended the peace that prevailed demanded development plans to be implemented and progress to be achieved in no time in every sphere, specially in the field of knowledge. This aroused consciousness of the value of education in people everywhere. The need of greatly felt education was further badly raised by the Independence that our nation secured. Half-bred education, no need to say, was incomplete and rather dangerous. Surely, in those post-independence days there was immeasurable excitement and enthusiasm among the youths for a rapid progress, a mobility and for a social transformation. Undoubtedly, for a realization of such a dream would require education to be provided as the only means. But, unless some reliable organization or a group of responsible social guardians would rise to the occasion who do you think comes up to fulfill the aspiration and the factual need. When the government, and for that matter, its concerned department cannot be moved to act promptly and earnestly in regard to simply approving or recognizing even the ready-made institution these days there was no question that the interim or newly-formed government of that time would readily come



ahead to give us an educational institution of our need and demand. The only possibility concerning Pedong people those days was that St. George's, being run by the Swiss fathers then, could be raised to a high school status, but at whose expenses? Were fathers prepared ? It is in this backdrop we have to see late Gilbert Singh's due role in grooming M.E. school to a high school status.

The main architect of the high school, Rev Fr Schyrr, had to be not only physically ready at the initial stage, but also to be mentally sure of sustaining consistent efforts to upkeep the zeal and spirit throughout. He badly needed some native hand really capable and reliable to give him unflinching courage and support to carry on with the vision of a secular full-fledged high school, which was then the highest peak in the educational ladder. The potential native was none other than Gilbert Kalu Singh, who stood by him girding up the loins to navigate the vessel, christened as St. George's, across not-at-all smooth sea. The avid craving of some desirous pupils to go for further education was thus going to be fulfilled – and certainly to go a long way to bear fruits. The management committee fully relied upon Gilbert Singh to set a firm footing to class IX to be newly opened in 1951 with a confidence to row them over to class X in 1952, when the recognition of a full-fledged high school was to be duly obtained. We can ill-afford to undermine or demean his instrumental role in procuring for us all a high school, which has till this day produced 55 batches of matriculates successively covering a span of three generations. Sadly, this is the lone high school till this date in this heavily saturated land of heterogeneous population.

The pupils felt fortunate to have an arduous teacher of his calibre, who was endowed with wonderful rare qualities. He was conversant with several subjects which he had to teach for want of qualified teachers then. For the quality and style of imparting instructional materials he was fondly enamoured. Was it not Gilbert Sir who took tender care of catering to all for the first experience of newly opened high school classes? He was a friend and guide to them who established such a rapport that the pupils all fell at home under his tutorship. No wonder, he was so active that apart from classroom works he would engage them in varied co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. This is how he kept the machine of the school on the run to turn over the crude materials into fine marketable products. In successive years we found a batch after batch passing

out from St. George's and some joining colleges in Darjeeling for coveted degrees. The Georgian products were found to be absorbed in different walks of life serving in different capacities in Bengal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal.

St. George's in her initial days, as a nascent or a budding high school, appeared by no means shaky or infirm but somehow presented a favourable environment for learning. As the results of the earlier batches in the board exams show I think we can say it was satisfactory. Should it not go to the credit of the then headmaster, Gilbert Singh? Whereas, the results of the batches later in the years after he had left were really disappointing. It took several years to set the things aright. We were all awe-struck with Gilbert Sir's multi-faceted personality. There was enough in him for any one to draw something or other from him. One was apt to be fascinated by his way of doing any act with a sense of artistic style. My seniors know much better that he was an artist of superb class, a successful painter, an excellent portraitist, a calligrapher and a craftsman. I won't do him justice if I end up here. Not to be unfair, I have to unfold at least some more prominent facets of his personalities. To put in nut-shell he was an entomologist, an ornithologist, a botanist, a taxidermist, all rolled into one. He was a proven



asset of Pedong to whom we ought to honour as a crusader. So to say, he was our intellectual height at Pedong in those days.

Very soft-spoken man with measured and tailored speech — all would listen to him with rapt attention. Fair deal with everyone, pleasant behaviour with all, a good sense of humour, a gentle treat with old and young alike, a polished language for all, made him ethically superior to all beyond hardly anybody's reach. Fair and just man as he was, I but find him to be at fault for leaving us in the lurch in 1958 September, when I was just climbing up the steep ladder of high school education, insurmountable for a larger number those days. Ours and later on batches missed him terribly from 1959 to realize only much later what forced him to look for a greener pasture elsewhere. Life at Pedong was really hard with what he would get at the mercy of the cold private management in St. George's where only the negligible benefit fell in his lot against a major share of his invaluable service. As a worldly being, he had unavoidable encumbrances for the sake of whose future security he had to act (wisely) in such a way as to go to our great loss. This is where we may find him wrong — in return of the best part of his life he had spent those days for our tomorrows in Pedong. That he is no more in this world after October 2006, should we have to remain oblivious of him? I seek your precious advice. ■



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Drugs-

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Mrs. Zoramluangaihi Vrite
Co-Ordinator HANDS

What is drug use and drug abuse?

Drug' as commonly known are actually substances occurring naturally or synthetically produced and used by people "because they expect to benefit from their use beyond mere maintenance of 'normal functions', whether through the experience of pleasure or by avoidance of pain".

*When drug is taken for medicinal use it is called drug use. The use of drug to cure illness is Drug Use.

*When drug is taken for reasons other than medical in amounts, strengths, frequency or manner that cause damage to the physical or mental functioning of an individual it become Drug Abuse.

Using the substance itself is not the problem but the effects of the substance on the body & mind both short and long term are causes for serious concern. Moreover, their use has the potential to harm both directly & indirectly. Firstly, their use has acute physical & psychological impacts originating from the different chemicals the substance is made up of and their impacts on the human body and mind.

E.g. – shortly after use of alcohol or cannabis there is an impairment of motor skills, perception, and increase in reaction time affecting complex activities like driving or operating machinery. Thus, the casualties resulting from driving after drinking alcohol or smoking cannabis and other accidents, suicides and assaults should also be seen as effects of substance use.

The most serious consequence is substance dependence, often caused by "Persistent or sporadic drug use inconsistent with or unrelated to acceptable medical practice.

This is manifested by one (or more) of the following:

- ✓ failure to fulfill major role obligations
- ✓ substance use in hazardous situations;
- ✓ recurrent substance-related legal problems;
- ✓ continued substance use despite having persistent or recurrent social or This dependence often disrupts the life of the user and his/her family members- undermining their health, education, and other priorities, jobs are lost and even at times families are broken or people go to jails

This dependence is manifested by tolerance & Withdrawal.

Interpersonal problems exacerbated by the effects of the substance"

The Signs and Symtoms of Drug Abuse

The signs and symptoms of drug abuse vary widely, a few listed below describe some of the changes you may see take place. In and of themselves, the symptoms may not mean a thing. However, if you see several of tem, consider it a warning sign for recognizing drug use seek further help.

Changes in Physical appearance

- *Red eyes and running nose,
- *Frequent congestion and coughing
- *Pale face, (dark) circles under eyes
- *Spots or sores around the mouth
- *Lack of personal cleanliness, messy appearance
- *Smell of drugs on breath/ body/clothes
- *Needle marks or bruises lower arm, legs or bottom of feet (in case injectors Changes in Eating & Sleeping Habits
- *Difficulty falling asleep, insomnia
- *Significant weight loss or gain
- *Poor appetite/sudden appetite

Changes in Behavior & Personality

- Abrupt changes in mood
- Hostility, defiance of rules
- Depression, "I don't care" attitude
- Lack of responsibility (for instance, not doing chores or homework, forgetting family occasions)
- Blaming, lying, making excuses
- Loss of memory, shortened attention span, disordered thought patterns
- Withdrawal from family, isolation, secretiveness
- Easily angered & attempt to ignore when confronted about chemical use

Changes in School or Job Performance

- Lowered grades, neglected homework
- Sluggishness and frequent absenteeism
- Falling asleep in odd hours/places
- Discipline problem
- Quitting or getting fired from jobs

Changes in friends and Interests

- * New or different friends, especially ones who use drugs
- Friends rarely introduced or seldom come to the house
- More time spent in room or away from home
- Secrecy about actions and possessions
- Hobbies, sports, or extra-curricular activities are given up; everything is boring

Red Flag Behaviors

- ☹ Steals
- ☹ Runs away from home
- ☹ Shows violent behavior
- ☹ Threatens or attempts suicide

nostalgia



This photo taken in the 1880's is of a scene of Chowrasta, Darjeeling.

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